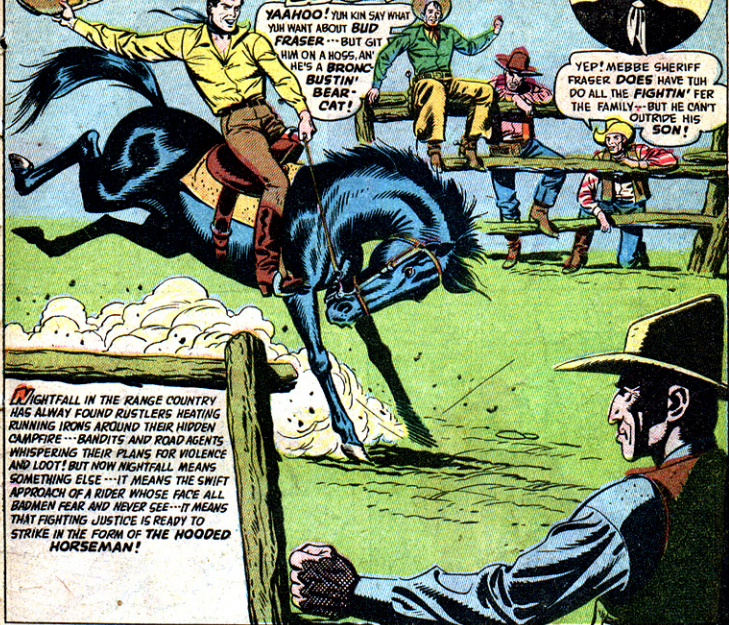


The HOODED HORSEMAN



YAAHOO! YUH KIN SAY WHAT YUH WANT ABOUT BUD FRASER... BUT GIT HIM ON A HOGS, AN' HE'S A BRONC BUSTIN' BEAR-CAT!

YEP! MEBBE SHERIFF FRAGER DOES HAVE TUH DO ALL THE FIGHTIN' FER THE FAMILY... BUT HE CAN'T OUTRIDE HIS SON!

NIGHTFALL IN THE RANGE COUNTRY HAS ALWAYS FOUND RUSTLERS HEATING RUNNING IRONS AROUND THEIR HIDDEN CAMPFIRE... BANDITS AND ROAD AGENTS WHISPERING THEIR PLANS FOR VIOLENCE AND LOOT! BUT NOW NIGHTFALL MEANS SOMETHING ELSE... IT MEANS THE SWIFT APPROACH OF A RIDER WHOSE FACE ALL BADMEN FEAR AND NEVER SEE... IT MEANS THAT FIGHTING JUSTICE IS READY TO STRIKE IN THE FORM OF THE HOODED HORSEMAN!

SO THAT'S THE SHERIFF'S SON, EH?

SHORE IS, CORRIGAN! I DON'T SAVVY WHY YUH ORGANIZED THIS HERE RODEO... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE BUD WINS THAT DOGGIE YUH OFFERED FER THE BEST BRONC RIDER!

A MOMENT LATER...

I'D LIKE TUH STAY AN' WATCH THE OTHER EVENTS, PARDNER... BUT I'VE GOT TUH MOSEY BACK TUH THE HOOSEGO AN' GIVE MUH PA A HAND! RECKON I'LL TAKE THAT DOGGIE NOW!

THAR'S WHAT WE WERE WAITIN' FER, CURLY!

BANG! BANG!

YEP! THE BOYS ARE SHOOTIN' THEIR WAY OUT O' TOWN... AN' IT'S TIME FER US TUH VAMOOSE, CORRIGAN!

HOMBRE, YUH'RE GITTIN' WHAT YUH WON... A DOGGY...

THAR'S YORE NEW BOSS, YUH FLEA-BAG... GIT MOVIN'!

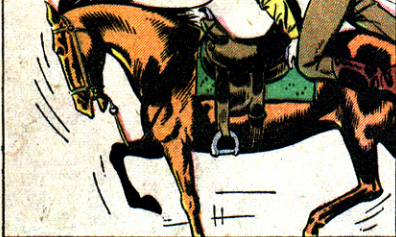
CRACK!



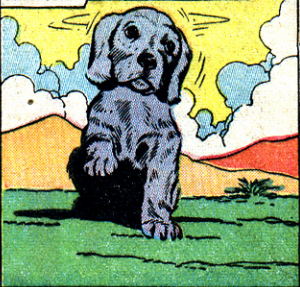
WEB COMIC
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AS THE TWO OUTLAWS GALLOP OFF...

JUMPIN' JIMSON... THOSE VAR-
MINTS HAVE BEEN UP TUN SOME-
THIN! CORRIGAN'S ROPEO WAS
JEST A **BLIND** TUN LURE ALL BUT
ONE MAN OUT O'
TOWN... **PA!**

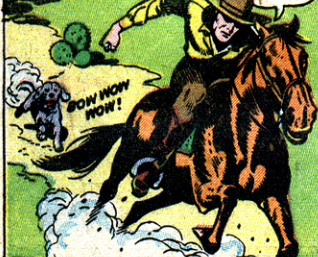


FOR JUST A SECOND, THE ABANDONED PUP TURNS
WITH A PUZZLED WHINE FROM CORRIGAN, SPEED-
ING IN ONE DIRECTION, TO BUD, RIDING THE
OTHER WAY...



Then... HE MAKES HIS CHOICE!

SOUNDS MIGHTY **QUIET**
BACK IN TOWN! BUT THAR'S
NO USE FRETIN'... PA'S
PROBABLY GOT 'EM
BEHIND BARS BY
NOW!



**BOW NOW
NOW!**

MINUTES LATER...

**PA! THOSE
POLECATS
GOT YUH!**

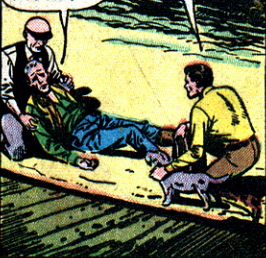
GOOD THING YUH GOT
HERE, BUD! THE SHERIFF'S
JEST ABOUT READY TUN
HEAD OFF ON A LONG
TRAIL... **FER KEEPS!**



BUD... I ALWAYS FIGGERED IT'D BE
ENOUGH TUN TEACH YUH TUN RIDE
LIKE A BLUE STREAK, AN' TUN LIVE
SQUARE... BUT I RECKON **THIS**
PROVES I WAS **WRONG!** YUH'VE
NEVER PACKED SIX-GUNS BEFORE
... BUT MEBBE **NOW** YUH'LL
GAVY WHY I WANT YUH
TUN TOTE **MINE!** LEARN
TUN USE 'EM, GON... **FER**
THE LAW!

I SHORE WISH... I
WASN'T LEAVIN' YUH
... ALONE IN THE
WORLD! YUH'RE GOIN'
TUN HAVE A TOUGH
TIME... FIGHTIN'
YORE WAY!

DON'T WORRY YORE-
SELF, PA! I'VE FOUND
MUHSELF A FRIEND
... AN' WE'RE GOIN'
TUN LEARN TUN FIGHT
OUR WAY **TOGETHER!**



SLOWLY, THE SHERIFF OF MESA CITY
TURNS HIS HEAD TOWARD THE SETTING
SUN... AND HIS LAST BREATH FADES
OFF!

HE'S... **GONE, PUP!** THE BEST
PARO I EVER HAD... THE SQUAREST-
SHOOTIN' HOMBRE I EVER MET...
AN' I'LL NEVER FORGIT
HIM!

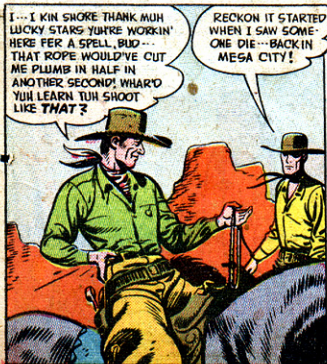
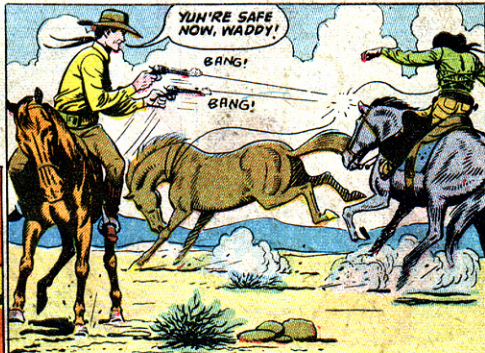
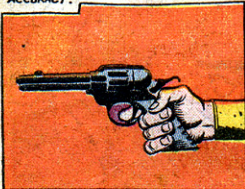




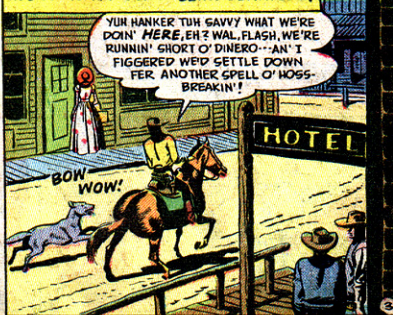
YES...A LOW GROWL ANSWERED THE SOUND OF THE HATED NAME! IN ONE HOUR OF VIOLENCE, EASY-GOING BUD FRASER HAS CHANGED TO A WADDY WITH DANGER IN HIS SEARCHING STRIDE...AN UNWANTED PUPPY HAS BECOME A DOG WITH A FRIEND! FROM NOW ON, THEY'LL SHARE WHATEVER THEY FIND...GOOD FORTUNE AND BITTER STRUGGLES...A PASSING "HOWDY!" FOR WADDIES MET ON THE WAY...AND A PAY-OFF FOR SLIM CORRIGAN!

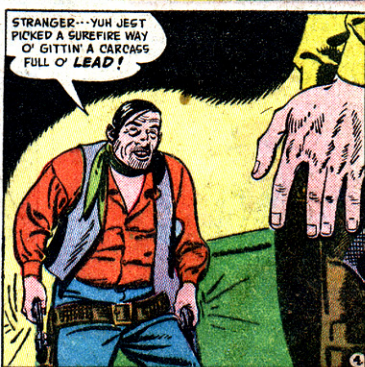
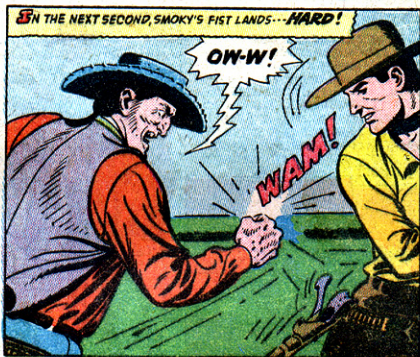
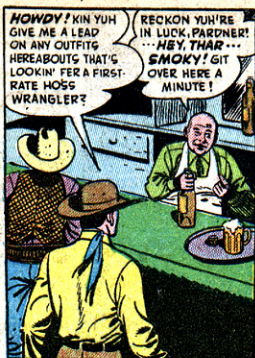


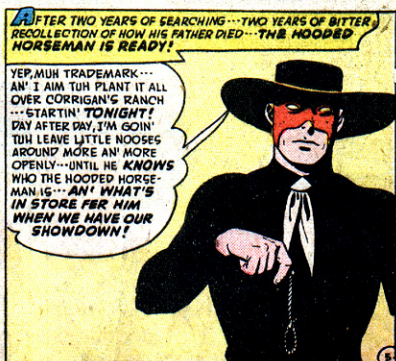
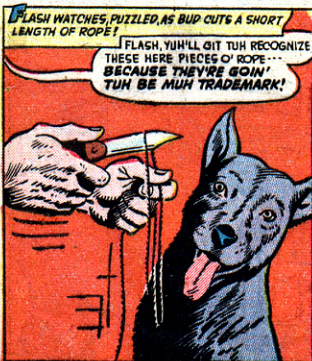
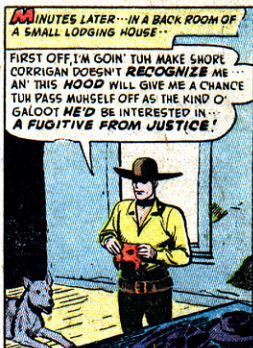
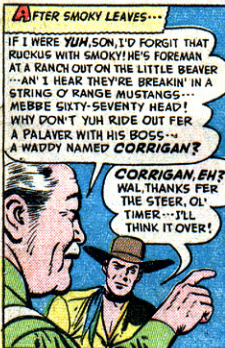
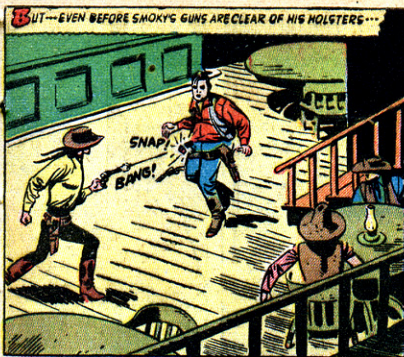
TWO YEARS PASS...TWO YEARS OF RUGGED ADVENTURE THAT HAVE MADE BUD A TOP-NOTCH BRONCBUSTER WHO CAN MASTER ANYTHING WITH FOUR HOOFS...AND FLASH A HUNDRED POUNDS OF FANG AND MUSCLE! BUT THAT'S NOT ALL THAT LIES AHEAD FOR SLIM CORRIGAN! THERE'S A PAIR OF NOTCHED '44'S THAT USED TO BE PACKED BY THE SHERIFF OF MESA CITY...GUNS THAT CAN BE DRAWN AND COCKED IN A SINGLE SWEEP OF THE HANDS...AND AIMED WITH STEEL-NERED ACCURACY!



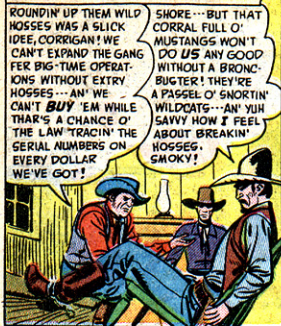
BUT BUD NEVER STICKS AT A JOB FOR MORE THAN A FEW MONTHS! THERE'S ONE THOUGHT THAT KEEPS HIM ON THE MOVE...ONE QUARRY HE'S GOT TO TRACK DOWN...**SLIM CORRIGAN!**







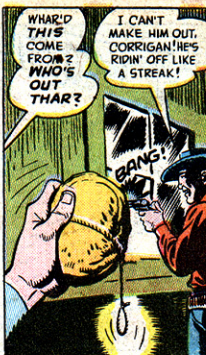
THAT NIGHT... AT THE CORRIGAN RANCH...



ROUNDIN' UP THEM WILD HOSSES WAS A SLICK IDEE, CORRIGAN! WE CAN'T EXPAND THE GANG FER BIG-TIME OPERATIONS WITHOUT EXTRY HOSSES... AN' WE CAN'T BUY 'EM WHILE THAR'S A CHANCE O' THE LAW 'TRACIN' THE SERIAL NUMBERS ON EVERY DOLLAR WE'VE GOT!

SHORE... BUT THAT CORRAL FULL O' MUSTANGS WON'T DO US ANY GOOD WITHOUT A BRONC-BUGTER! THEY'RE A PASSEL O' SNORTIN' WILDCATS... AN' YUH SAVVY HOW I FEEL ABOUT BREAKIN' HOSSES? SMOKY!

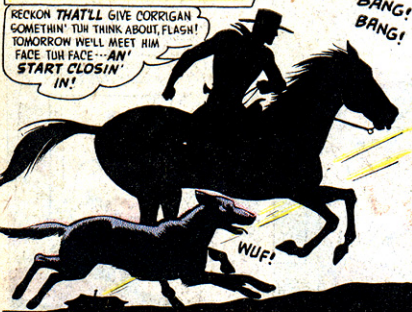
SUDDENLY...



WHAR'D THIS COME FROM? WHO'S OUT THAR?

I CAN'T MAKE HIM OUT, CORRIGAN! HE'S RIDIN' OFF LIKE A STREAK!

AS THE HOODED HORSEMAN GALLOPS INTO THE DARKNESS THAT MATCHES HIS BLACK AND MENACING FORM...



RECKON THAT'LL GIVE CORRIGAN SOMETHIN' TUH THINK ABOUT, FLASH! TOMORROW WE'LL MEET HIM FACE TUH FACE... AN' START CLOSIN' IN!

BANG!
BANG!

WUF!

NEXT DAY... A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE RANCH...

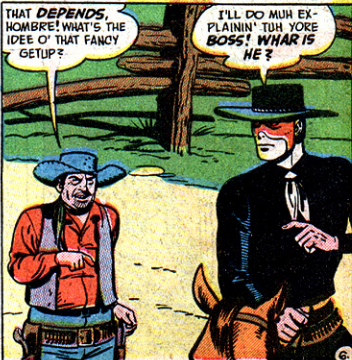


YUH'D BETTER WAIT IN THE BRUSH, FLASH! I'LL HAVE A LOOK-SEE... AN' IF IT APPEARS I KIN PASS MUHSELF OFF IN THIS DISGUISE WITHOUT MAKIN' CORRIGAN SUSPICIOUS, I'LL WHISTLE FER YUH!

MINUTES LATER... HOWDY! THE BARTENDER BACK IN TOWN MENTIONED THAT ONE O' YUH PUNCHERS TANGLED WITH A WADDY WHO WAS A MITE TOO FUSSEY TUH BREAK HOSSES FER THE CORRIGAN OUTFIT! WAL... THAR'S A JOB THAT WAS MADE TUH ORDER FER ME!



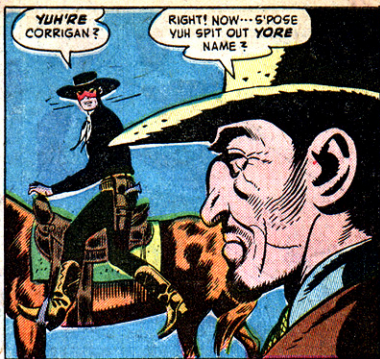
THAT DEPENDS, HOMBRE! WHAT'S THE IDEE O' THAT FANCY GETUP?



I'LL DO MUH EXPLAININ' TUH YORE BOSS! WHAR IS HE?



WHO IN SAM HILL IS THAT?



YUH'RE CORRIGAN?

RIGHT! NOW... S'POSE YUH SPIT OUT YORE NAME?



I'VE MADE A MISTAKE... **THIS** ISN'T THE CORRIGAN I'M AFTER! BUT IF I UNMASK **NOW**, SMOKY'S GOIN' TUH RECOGNIZE ME AS THE WADDY HE TANGLED WITH BACK IN TOWN... AN' I CAN'T RISK A RUCKUS AT A TIME WHEN I NEED A FEW WEEKS' WORK! THAR'S ONLY ONE WAY OUT... I'LL HAVE TUH EXPLAIN THE **REAL REASON** FER MUH DISGUISE!

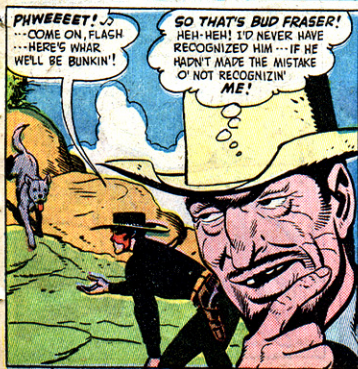


CORRIGAN, MUH NAME'S **BUD FRASER**... FROM MESA CITY! MUH PA WAS SHERIFF THAR UNTIL A PASSEL O' BANK ROBBERS PLUGGED HIM... AN' I'M WEARIN' THIS DIS-GUISE SO'S I KIN GIT A LEAD ON 'EM WITHOUT HAVIN' 'EM SAVVY I'M ON THEIR TRAIL!



WAL, CORRIGAN... THIS WADDY SOUNDS PURTY CONVINCIN'! **RECKON WE KIN GIVE HIM SOMETHIN'?**

WHY... UH... **SHORE!** THAR'S NOTHIN' LIKE PICKIN' THE **RIGHT MAN**, SMOKY!



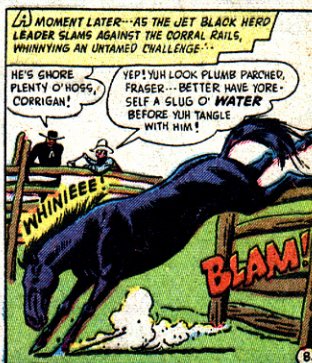
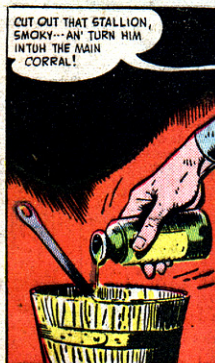
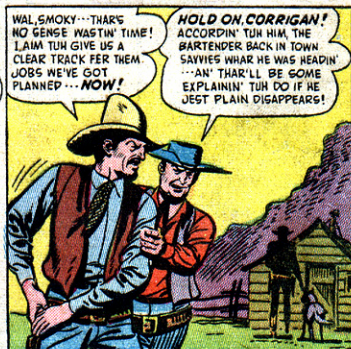
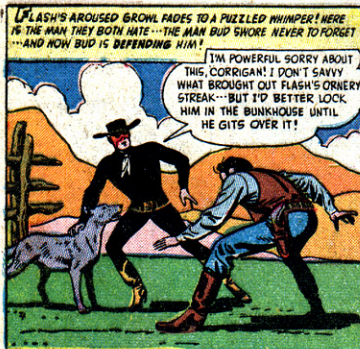
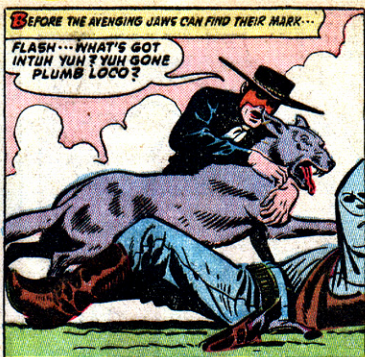
PHWEEET! ...COME ON, FLASH... HERE'S WHAR WE'LL BE BUNKIN'!

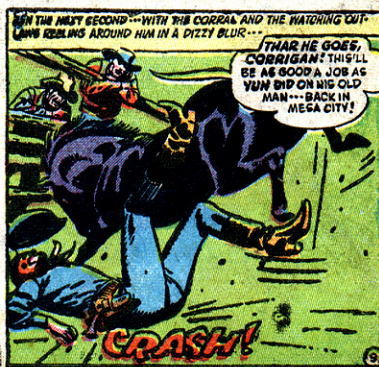
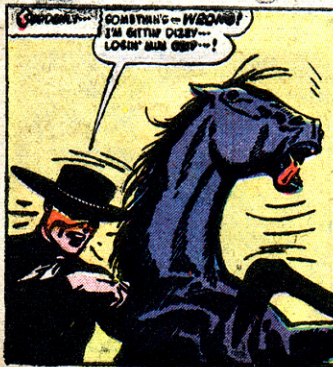
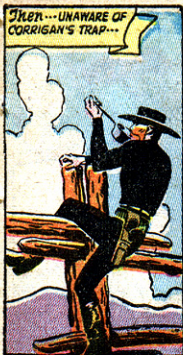
SO THAT'S **BUD FRASER!** HEH-HEH! I'D NEVER HAVE RECOGNIZED HIM... IF HE HADN'T MADE THE MISTAKE O' NOT RECOGNIZIN' **ME!**

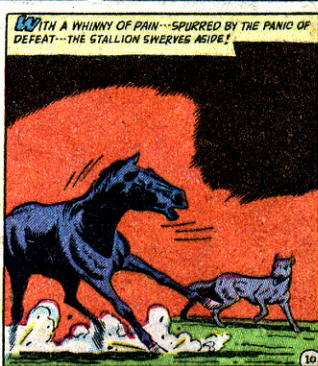
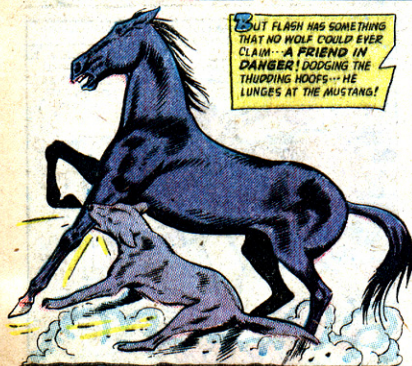
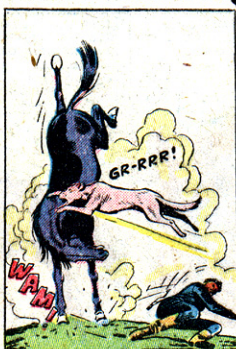
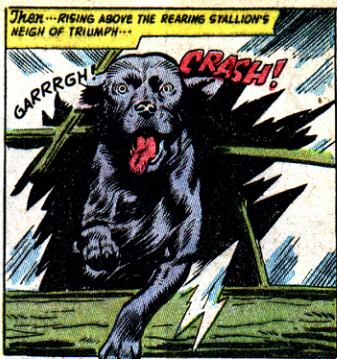
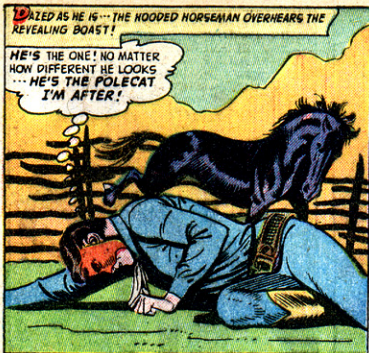
NO, THERE'S NOTHING RECOGNIZABLE IN SLIM CORRIGAN'S CHANGED FEATURES... BUT THERE'S SOMETHING THAT **HASN'T** CHANGED! IT'S THE SCENT OF A MAN WHO DEALT OUT QUIRT BLOWS AND KICKS TO A HALF-GROWN PUP... **AND FLASH REMEMBERS!**



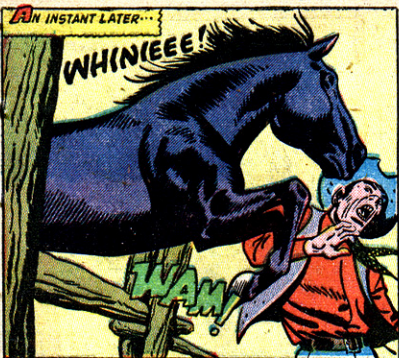
GRRR-RR!







AN INSTANT LATER...



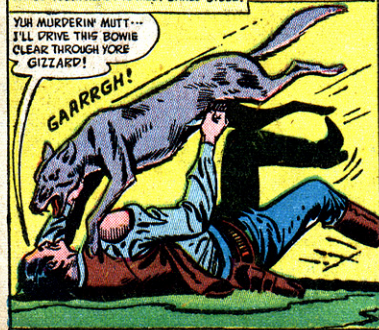
Then...AS THE HOODED HORSEMAN RISES...



FOR TWO YEARS, FLASH AND BUD HAVE BEEN A TEAM...A TEAM THAT HAS LEARNED TO WORK TOGETHER...FAST!



FLASH SEES THE GLINTING KNIFE UPRAISED IN CORRIGAN'S HAND... BARED TEETH READY TO MEET BARED STEEL!



FLASH...HOLD IT! I'LL HANDLE THIS SKULKIN' COYOTE...GUARD THE OTHERS!

